



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

25. Höflichkeit ist eine stillschweigende Übereinkunft, gegenseitig die moralisch und intellektuell elende Beschaffenheit von einander zu ignorieren und sie sich nicht vorzurücken — wodurch diese zu beiderseitigem Vorteil etwas weniger leicht zutage kommt.

26. Im Alter gibt es keinen schöneren Trost, als dass man die ganze Kraft seiner Jugend Werken einverleibt hat, die nicht mit altern.

27. Im Alter versteht man besser, die Unglücksfälle zu verhüten, in der Jugend sie ertragen. (G. i. B. in Nr. 38 der „Schlesischen Schulzeitung“.)

Discussion on: "Present Conditions and the Direct Method." *

By Carl A. Krause, Ph. D., Jamaica H. S., New York City.

We learn a living language in order that we may be able to understand it and to use it. To attain both ends, the spoken and the recorded language must be considered. The most economical way of becoming proficient in the latter is by way of the former. If we have anything to say and can say it, we can write it also. But how can we write effectively if we have something to say but are not thoroughly conversant with the usage of the tongue? What is the result? A heterogeneous composite à la mosaic, but with an effect that is appalling.

Now let no one misunderstand me: I am not championing a so-called natural method of teaching modern languages—which is a *lucus a non lucendo*—but a rational method which will be productive of best results. If we start with the sounds, words, phrases and easy sentences of the foreign language, soon the habit of thinking in it will not only be engendered but become stable. I should advise not using any books in the initial stage of our modern language instruction, and this for two reasons:

- 1) No printed symbols will confuse the pupil in the very beginning.
- 2) The constant staggering from one language into an entirely different one will be avoided. After some five weeks of preliminary practice of aural and oral training, an easy Reader may be taken up reserving the study of systematic Grammar to the very end of the first term after the pupil knows something of the language.

Someone will speak of the difficulties confronting us in employing the direct method of teaching modern languages. I say, difficulties there are everywhere, and there is no royal road to learning. But most difficul-

* Spoken before the Modern Language Round Table Conference of the N. E. A. at Boston, Mass., on July 8, 1910.

ties are not very serious, or appear greater than they really are. Let us take e. g. the age of the pupils, the time and length allotted to the study of modern languages, and the inherent difficulty, chiefly of German. Believe me, all of these seeming obstacles will vanish before an energetic, resourceful Modern Language teacher. Our pupils entering upon the study of foreign languages are about 14 years old. To be sure, I should like to see them start a few years younger, but what of it? Their vocal organs are still flexible. They have imagination and enthusiasm in abundance.—As to time, five periods a week and four years' length are enough to obtain good results, as is proved by the Frankfurter Reform-Realgymnasien for the study of English. Of course, a one-year course in modern languages is an absurdity.

German inflections are serious, I grant, but the results achieved in France with the direct method are more than satisfactory, and go to prove that even the most troublesome features of German accidence can be readily mastered in this way, i. e. cases, prepositions, adjective and noun declensions, genders, position of words etc.

As to dearth of properly trained teachers—which is one of the most important problems—it is really amazing to record how little it takes to employ and succeed with the direct method. A conscientious teacher does not need to be a *Sprachmeister*, but must have so assimilated the work in question that intelligent queries may be asked and suitable full answers be given. *Docendo discimus* is true everywhere and likewise "practice makes perfect". A given text has its specific vocabulary, which can easily be handled by any fairly well-prepared teacher. I can safely assert that in our own city not many teachers, if any, could be found who could not appeal to the pupils directly in the foreign tongue if they, the teachers, were encouraged and directed to proceed thus. The effect upon the teaching would be a vitalizing of our instruction and a regeneration, or, at least, a vivification of both teachers and pupils alike.

How about our present examinations? Do they test the pupils' knowledge of language and Sprachgefühl? I most emphatically say: No, but they bring forth some nominal and verbal formations that are truly wonderful, at times impossible, at times meaningless.

What do you think of questions like: Conjugate, in the singular, *vorgefallen* in the present indicative; *anfang* in the perfect indicative passive. Write, with the definite article, the genitive singular and the nominative plural of *Sonne*. Translate into idiomatic English: Diese Behandlung der Fabel ist *nichts weniger als notwendig*, where at our Borough Conference of German Teachers most of the ones present broke down. Write the synopsis of *hob auf* in the second singular passive. Imperative: *werde aufgehoben* reminds me of *werde geboren*.

I shall not speak at length now of these examinations, especially the so-called Regents', since I reserve them for another day. All I want to say is: As long as grammatic formalism and pedantic erudition reign supreme, that long we cannot expect to teach German and French properly. Let us free ourselves from this incubus of modern language instruction and let us take the road which leads to happiness and conscious power, i. e. the direct method of teaching modern languages.

Let the work in modern languages be primarily work in aural and oral facility and let it be tested in all examinations. For the ability to speak a foreign language is the best means to the desired end of learning that language. The educational authorities of New York City are beginning to realize the importance of this matter.

A Course in German in the High School.

By **Theodore W. Schiek**, McKinley High School, St. Louis, Mo.

1. *General.*

To bring the student in contact with the civilization and the culture of the German speaking nations.

2. *Special.*

(A) To teach the students to understand readily the spoken language.

(B) To give him sufficient practice to enable him to express his own thought on simple subjects, both orally and in writing.

(C) To familiarize him with a vocabulary large enough to enable him, after having taken a course of two years, to read intelligently prose or verse of ordinary difficulty, and after having taken the four years' course, to read some of the masterpieces of German Literature.

(D) To make the student acquainted with the principal facts of history, geography, institutions and social customs of the German speaking peoples; the emphasis, throughout the course, to be laid upon the life of the present day.

(E) To give the student that mental discipline which is peculiar to the study of foreign languages.

These *Aims* are best attained by applying the following principles:

1. *Pronunciation*—First the sound, then the symbol. Pupils must learn the foreign sounds from the lips of the teacher, not from the printed page of the text book; mere imitation alone proves insufficient, the teacher must show the position of the organs of speech in producing the sound.